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BISHOP DOANE'S ADDRESS:

ORGANIZATIONS,

DANGEROUS TO FREE INSTITUTIONS



ORGANIZATIONS,
DANGEROUS TO FREE INSTITUTIONS:

THE ADDRESS,

AT

BURLINGTON COLLEGE,

July 4, 1855;

THE SEVENTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

AND THE NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF BURLINGTON COLLEGE:

BY THE

RT. REV. GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D. D., LL. D.

PRESIDENT.



INQUIRER BOOK PRESS, PHILADELPHIA.

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BURLINGTON COLLEGE, }
July 4th, 1855. }

RIGHT REV. SIR :—

At a meeting of the audience present during the delivery of your Address in the College Hall, we have been appointed a Committee to request a copy for publication, which we hope you will not deny them : feeling assured that it will be the means of advancing the cause of Christian education, to which you have been so long and faithfully devoted ; and will contribute to increase our estimation of the great principle which gave being to our State ; and to kindle those emotions of patriotism which may lead us to promote our highest interest.

We are, Rt. Rev. Sir,

Your affectionate friends and servants,

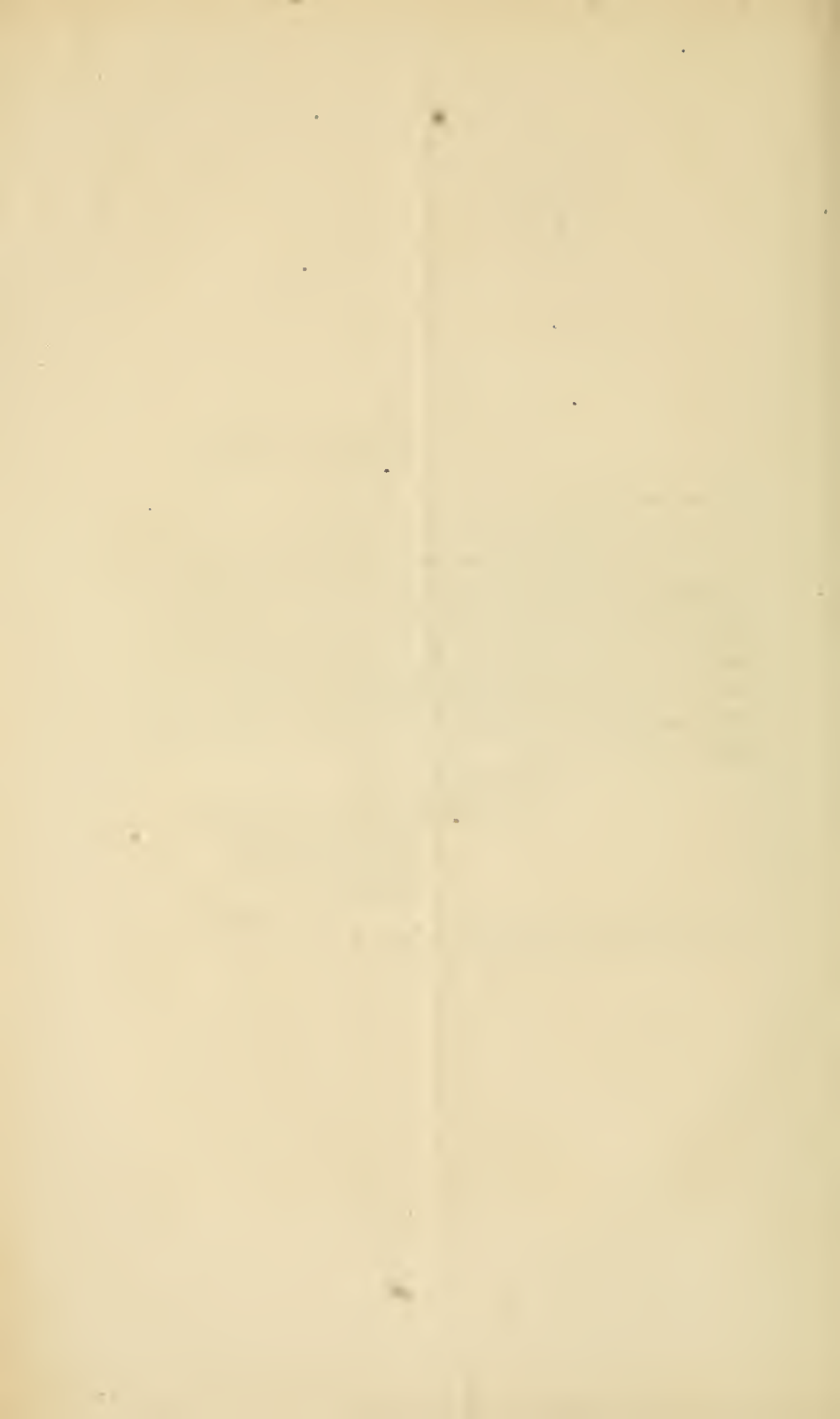
FRANKLIN GAUNTT,

GARRIT S. CANNON,

F. ENGLE,

Committee. ~

To the RT. REV. G. W. DOANE, D. D., LL. D., &c.



THE FOURTH OF JULY,

AT BURLINGTON COLLEGE.

The annual celebration of the National and Academic birthday, at Burlington College, began with the usual exchange of congratulations, between the Students of the College and the Right. Rev. President, at Riverside, at nine o'clock on the morning of the Fourth. The procession from the College was headed by Cross's Philadelphia Band. Mr. Hugh L. Clarke, of the Senior Class, addressed the Bishop, as the representative of his classmates and companions, as follows :—

RIGHT REVEREND PRESIDENT :

It is no mere etiquette, no idle ceremony, that has brought us to your door. We come, your sons, to congratulate you upon the return of this glorious day. To us, it has no common interest. We celebrate, at the same time, the anniversary of the birthday of our country, and that of our College. This day it is, which, more than any other, binds American hearts together ; and makes them, truly, what they boast to be, a band of brothers. Private differences, party dissensions, all are forgotten, in the general interest. There is no North or South, no East or West. It is America.

It is a day, rich in its associations ; a day, above all others, in which to bless our God, for the inestimable boon of liberty. It is a day, in which we love to linger on the names of the martyr-heroes of the revolution ; a day consecrated to their memory. Would that they might be permitted now to see the blessings, which they created. But, alas ! it cannot be. The hands, that drew up the Declaration of Independence, have crumbled into dust ; the eloquent

lips, that advocated it, are closed ; the arms, that so nobly fought in its defence, are still, in death. But, let us pray, that the spirit that animated their noble souls may dwell within their sons, to make them what they were, defenders of the right.

For thrice three years, on the return of this day, willing hearts have hastened, to pay you the tribute of their gratitude. Gratitude, for the many noble lessons, we have received from you. You have taught us to be freemen in the noblest sense ; to make religion life's guiding star ; to be Christian Patriots. You have shown us, in words which, we trust, we can none of us forget, how to be "the men to make a State ;" be men of thought ; be men of acts ; be men of prayer ; be sons of Washington. For these, and more than these, we owe you the deepest veneration, and the warmest love. That we feel it, is, to you, a twice-told tale ; but, none the worse, for repetition.

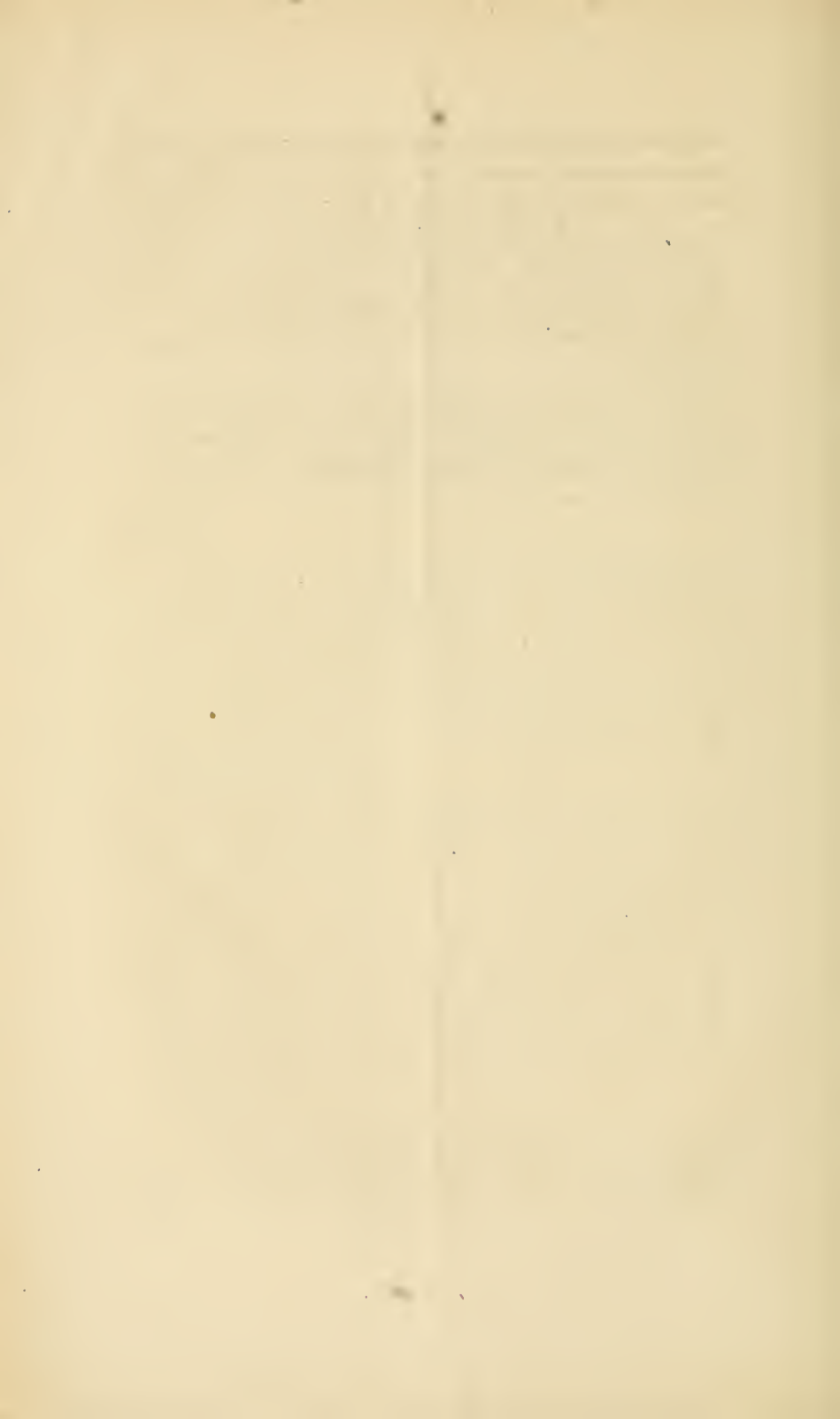
My father, may many a natal morn of this, our youthful College, dawn upon you, yet. Many times more, may your children gather round you, to greet you, with glad hearts ; and, as our noble Delaware rolls its tide along, to swell the ocean wave, so may a long line of freemen go, from our College walls, to swell the tide of our true hearted patriots. And, on each succeeding anniversary of this glorious day, when we bless the name of our country's great and good, deepest, most warmly cherished in our hearts, will be your name, our father, and our Washington.

The Bishop replied briefly, alluding, in turn, to each division of the two-fold theme of celebration ; and concluding with a caution, so necessary in these times, not to be carried away by the name *Independence*, into a forgetfulness of our mutual dependence upon each other, and the entire dependence of us all upon God. The independence, which is the watchword and key-note of this day's exultation, he represented as a historical independence ; and the subjection and chastening of all the feelings into thankfulness and obedience, which this anniversary suggests, as the part of a true religious patriotism.

At eleven o'clock, the Declaration of Independence was read, to a very large company, assembled in the College Study, by Mr. T. Gardiner Littell, of the Senior Class. After the musical interlude,

the Bishop delivered his ninth Annual Oration : which it was determined, at a meeting, of those present, held immediately after its delivery, to publish ; and Dr. Gauntt, Mr. G. S. Cannon, and Captain P. Engle were appointed a Committee, to request a copy, and to attend to its publication. The Rt. Rev. President, several of the Trustees, and the Alumni, who were largely represented on the occasion, and the clergy and other friends, dined, with the students, at one o'clock.

The day closed with an elocutionary soiree, at seven o'clock. The pieces selected for declamation were appropriate and patriotic ; and the whole performance universally pronounced agreeable and interesting.



ORGANIZATIONS, DANGEROUS TO FREE INSTITUTIONS.

OUR national existence wants but one, to-day, of fourscore years. In an age of progress, like the present, this is almost antiquity. A year does, now, what ten could not, a thousand years ago. We just reverse the antediluvian standard. Manhood must have come late, when life could reach nine hundred years and sixty-nine. And, when a nation springs, full-grown, into existence, age must come soon. The Constitution of the United State wants two, of three score years and ten ; and, through what changes it has passed ! Well, as it works, in spite of the infirmity of men, how differently from their design, who framed it ! Take, for example, the Constitutional requirement, that the electors of President and Vice President shall meet, on the same day, in all the States. In the simplicity of their virtue, they provided, thus, that the election, in every State, should be entirely free. They aimed at making it impossible, that any one could be controlled, by any other, or by all the rest. They never dreamed, that two Conventions, in Baltimore, or Philadelphia, would settle everything, beforehand. That the assembling of the Electoral Colleges would come to be the merest shadow of a form. That the only office of the Electors, when they came together, would be to name and certify the man, who had been agreed upon, by this or that Convention : throwing a pre-determined vote, without the slightest exercise of judgment, or of freedom. And, that who shall be the President, would be just as well known, before, as after, their assembling. This is but one instance of the change, which has

come round, in the working of the Constitution, in less than seventy years. Another, and a more disastrous, is the overwhelming importance, which attaches, now, to office, and the patronage, involved in it. It is not too much to say, that administrations seem now to be selected, not for the government of the country; not for maintaining its relations with foreign powers; not for the security of private rights, nor to promote the happiness of the people: but to make the appointments, and to fill the offices. That, to the victors, the spoils belong, is now an axiom of the country. How far this is, from the true ends and uses of a government; how dangerous to the rights of the people, how degrading to the character of the nation, needs no philosophy, to show: nor, need I dwell on these unquestionable truths. What I purpose to do, is, to point out, very briefly, what seems to me the greatest danger of the day; and, then, to indicate its remedy. Organizations are, in my judgment, dangerous to free institutions. The individual exercise of the right of suffrage, in the integrity of freedom, is their only safety.

Organizations are dangerous to free institutions. There must be free men, to have institutions free. And organizations are incompatible with freedom. Whoever enters into such a compact, binds himself, by the very act, to the surrender of his judgment and of his action, to the will of a majority. Who does not know, by how very few, these majorities are governed? And, how commonly, one popular leader makes them, merely, the exponents of his will? That was no chance definition, which declared "party," "the madness of the many, for the benefit of the few." And, the teaching of all history is, in nothing, more uniform, than in this, that party-spirit digs the grave of freedom. The prophetic eye of Washington beheld this danger, from afar. In that noblest legacy, which uninspired wisdom has yet given to mankind, his "Farewell Address," "to the People of the United States," he utters these oracles of wisdom. "The alternate domination of one faction, over another, sharpened

by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which, in different ages and countries, has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is, itself, a frightful despotism. But, this leads, at length, to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose, in the absolute power of an individual; and, sooner or later, the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate, than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

“Without looking forward, to an extremity of this kind, (which, nevertheless, ought not to be entirely out of sight,) the common and continued mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it. It serves, always, to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community, with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part, against another; foment, occasionally, riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption; which find a facilitated access to the government itself, through the channels of party passions. Thus, the policy and will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

“There is an opinion, that parties, in free countries, are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true: and, in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look, with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But, in those of a popular character, or governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendencies, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit, for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire, not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance, to prevent its bursting into a flame; lest, instead of warming, it consume.”

How truly, in sixty years, all this has been confirmed. Nay, the first four elections of a President more than confirmed it, all. Term after term, the country was divided and distracted, by two opposing parties, under different names. One four years' strife was only terminated, by the renewal of another. At the present time, no line divides the nation, into two. There are no two party names, which serve as rallying cries, for the election. But, a state of things, still worse, is growing up. New organizations have been formed, and still are forming; professing principles, but seeking power. The more influential, from their compactness. The more dangerous, from their speciousness. The most destructive, when they act with secrecy. As if, in a free country, there should be any thing clandestine. As if liberty did not walk, always, in the light. Against this form of evil, as against the spirit of party, in general, we have the solemn warning of our Washington. "All combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe, the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party—often, a small, but artful and enterprising, minority of the community: and, according to the triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-conceived and incongruous projects of faction; rather than the agent of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common counsels, and modified by mutual interests. However, combinations or associations of the above description may, now and then, answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things to become potent engines; by which, cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying, afterwards, the very engines, which had lifted them to unjust dominion."

Were ever truer words? Was ever warning more impressive? Are we not, now, surrounded by these very evils? Are we not, now, more than, threatened with these very dangers? I speak, with no prejudice, of any of these movements of the day. I hold them all, alike, as wrong in principle, and perilous in result. To none of them, do I owe any thing.

“Nullius addictus, jurare in verba magistri.”

“Sworn to no master; of no sect, am I.”

Whatever name they bear, whatever object they profess, I am against them all. Under a stern and grinding despotism, men may find combination necessary; though they combine, with halters round their necks. But, here, where all can think, where all can read, where all can write, where all can print; where all men claim that they are equal; and the will of the majority is the admitted law; that, which cannot be obtained, without a special organization, must be wrong: and the organization, which relies on secrecy, should be regarded with suspicion; and distrusted, lest it prove destructive.*

From the proposition, that organizations are dangerous to free institutions, I pass to that, which is its counterpart. *The individual exercise of the right of suffrage, in the integrity of freedom, is their only safety.* In a free government, rights and responsibilities are reciprocal. Equal rights involve equal responsibilities. The man, who delegates his responsibilities, has conveyed away his rights. VOTE is from *Votum*. Its first sense is, a *wish*, or *will*. The wisher, for a measure, or for a man, becomes a *voter*. His *vote* is his will. Who else can wish, for him? To whom, can he depute his will? In what other way, can the wish of the nation be

* It may be supposed that my argument is addressed to the association, commonly spoken of, as “Know Nothings.” But, it is not so. *I know nothing* of them, or of any other organization, present or historical. I but reproduce the words of Washington; to enforce them, in the guidance of the young Americans, committed to my care.

ascertained, than by the wishes, or votes, of a majority? To whom, but to its duly constituted representatives, can it entrust the expression of its will? The attempt to forestal it, through conventions, or to control it by associations, is virtually to surrender the government, to a few ambitious demagogues; and, however little suspected, is the longest first step, that a nation can take, toward the surrender of its liberties. The besetting sin of man is selfishness: and it does not take a hundred years, to pervert a government, which was framed by the noblest hearts, and in the purest patriotism, into a machine, to work the ambitious and self seeking into place and power. It is the result of caucuses, and conventions, and societies, and unconstitutional organizations, of every kind, to frame and carry out the compact between office seekers: the most aspiring, to secure their elevation, by their pledges of distribution, to the hungry crew, who are their tools and slaves; till their turn comes, to be the masters. This is inseparable from the machinery of politics. And it works too well, for the mercenary and the ambitious, to be easily got rid of. The one remedy is in every man, securing his own rights, by the discharge of his own responsibilities. The exercise of the individual right of suffrage, in the integrity of freedom. I shall be told that this is impossible.* That candidates could never be selected, in this way. That there could be no elections. My simple reply is, try it. If candidates are to represent a caucus, or a convention, or a society, or a party, it is all well, as it is. But, if they are to represent the people, the people must select them; the people must elect them. As it now is, they are selected, by

* My single and sufficient reply to this objection is; then, a republic is an impossibility. I do not believe it. Our government, at present, is very nearly an oligarchy of office-holders and office-hunters. "You would not have spoken so," said a most intelligent and excellent friend, "if you had desired an office." "Oh, yes, I would," was my reply: "I would not have an office, on any other terms." "Then," he said, "you would never get a vote!" Could there be clearer demonstration of my argument!

the office-seekers ; and elected, by those, whom they assemble, at the polls. At the present time, George Washington could not be made the President of the United States. We know that Henry Clay, and John C. Calhoun, and Daniel Webster could not. To "the powers that be," the Christian citizen will pay allegiance and obedience. But, the theory of our Constitution is, and the only theory of a true republic, that those who exercise the government shall be chosen by the people ; and, that the people, guided by intelligence and controlled by virtue, shall choose, in every case, the best. "Is he honest, is he capable, is he faithful to the Constitution?" was Jefferson's enumeration of the qualities, for office. The question, now, is, can he be elected? And, if he is, will he give me an office? It was a current maxim of the ancient patriotism, "*Salus populi, suprema lex.*" *The first principle of the government is the welfare of the people.* We could suit the present state of things much better, by a text from Tacitus, "*Romæ, omnia venalia.*" *At Rome, all things for sale.* Which, being translated into American, is, *to the victors, belong the spoils.*

Neighbours and friends, my speech to you, to-day, has been of the very plainest. But, there is no food, in flattery. Nor any thing, for health and happiness, like the bare truth. No one will deny, that things are as I state them. No one can doubt, that the tendency is downward. In vain, we trust to our broad territory, to its vast productiveness, to the energy of the people, to the advancements in science and in art, to an age of progress. Virtue is as essential, to a nation, as to a man. And, without virtue, freedom cannot be. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." I have pointed out, what I believe to be, with God's blessing, our rescue and our remedy. The exercise of individual suffrage, in the integrity of freedom. Every man should vote: and every man should vote for the best man. We should have no exciting quarrels, then, as to this or that specific

combination, for the benefit of parties, or interests, or individuals. To live under the Constitution, and to vote for the Constitution, would describe the citizen. To administer the government, according to the Constitution, would be the standard of official action, through all the grades of office. The government of the United States would thus become, in practice, what our patriot fathers made it; the most perfect of all human institutions. And, to be an American citizen, and, like Paul, "born free," would then describe the highest style of man.

This is a training school for CHRISTIAN FREEMEN. In mind and heart, we are devoted to that work. In this connection, we can have no other thought, no other wish. Our text-books, as Christians, are the Bible and the Prayer Book. As Freeman, our text-book is the Constitution. We need no other: and there are no better. But, in neither case, will books, alone, suffice; nor all the learning, which all books can give. To be a Freeman, to be a Christian, is a practical thing. It must be done; not, merely, known. "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them." Dear children of my love, my duty, and my prayers, be to the Church, be to the country, true and faithful sons. Strive, here, to form the character and habits, which will adorn your lives, and beautify your deaths, and go with you into immortality.

"He is a freeman, whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves, beside."*

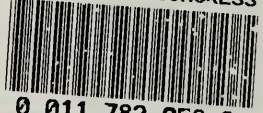
In the blessed words of the divine and holy Saviour, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free."

"Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength, to the brave, and Power and Deity;
Yet, in themselves, are nothing. One decree
Spake laws to *them*; and said, that, by the soul,
Only, the nations shall be great, and free."†

* Cowper.

† Wordsworth.

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